



My name is Patrick Doyle and I serve as Executive Director of KNOX, an organization here in Hartford built on a vision to ensure everyone in the city has access to the benefits of greenspaces. In the past two years alone KNOX has planted more than 1200 trees in partnership with the city, grant-makers, and private donors—focusing on the areas of the city with the lowest canopy coverage.

I would like to express my support of providing \$500,000 of funding in 2024 that would focus on expansion of tree planting and foresting in environmental justice communities and tracts. An assessment and study done by the University of Vermont found that Hartford has 25% canopy coverage; while the state of Connecticut boasts 64.5% canopy coverage.

Trees provide a number of important benefits that are vital in Hartford and other environmental justice communities.

From an environmental standpoint they sequester carbon from the atmosphere, cool the air, and reduce storm water run-off.

From a health standpoint they filter air pollution and produce oxygen lowering asthma rates, mitigating heat related illness and deaths, and reducing stress.

Economically, trees can help municipalities and the state save on energy expenses, public health costs, and environmental protection.

Trees have even been found to reduce crime.

According to Hartford's Tree Canopy Action Plan, sustaining Hartford's existing tree canopy would require planting 1,500 trees each year, but KNOX and our partners hope to contribute to the city's plan of moving from 25% to 35% canopy coverage. That would require both maintaining existing trees and planting 3,500 each year in the city.

It is encouraging to see the state recognizing the importance of investing in tree planting and foresting in environmental justice communities and tracts. I look forward to a long-term commitment to creating tree equity across the state so all residents can access the benefits of a healthy tree canopy. Thank you.

In addition to planting trees, KNOX supports a variety of urban agriculture, volunteer, education, and workforce development programs. I was pleased to see that many of these important areas are included for support and would be remiss if I did not express my support for the CT Grown for CT Kids program—which benefits both students and farmers in Hartford. By working together we can ensure that everyone in our state has access to greenspaces and the many benefits it provides.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patrick Doyle

More information can be found in Hartford's [Tree Canopy Action Plan](#)